

As theological education is particularly fragmented by denominational interests, much could be done to formulate coordination and cooperation in this field of education. It was also felt that too many students from the Third World tend to become deculturalized overseas, so that more emphasis should be given to promote the educational needs of colleges within the Third World.

In summary, the group emphasized the crucial importance of the campus in today's society. Past evangelical revivals began on university and college campuses, and evangelical scholarship has also laid the foundation of many universities. Today, however, Christian higher education is often a euphemism for poor scholarship. We have to earn again the right to be heard so that scholarship goes hand in hand with evangelism. The Christian educator has a much broader mandate than to "witness" evangelically; he has responsibility, too, to train students in all the professional skills required in contemporary society. The recognition that we live in God's world is a cultural mandate that needs a deeper reflection than is customarily given.

DEPTH IN EVANGELISM — An Interpretation of "In-Depth Evangelism" Around the World

Orlando E. Costas

The generic term *In-Depth Evangelism* stands for a worldwide evangelistic movement which had its *formal* inception in an experiment carried out in the Republic of Nicaragua in 1960. It can be succinctly described as an effort to *mobilize the church of Jesus Christ with all of her resources for a comprehensive witness in the world*. It represents, at once, a dynamic evangelistic concept, a comprehensive strategic methodology and a coordinated, functional program which in the last decade-and-a-half has become one of the most formidable challenges before the contemporary church around the world.

Since it is a movement, however, it can neither claim to be the possession of a single entity, individual person, or institution, nor to have a definitive, authoritative interpretation. Therefore, this paper should not be construed as the official word of the movement. It is simply the interpretative analysis of a participant-observer who is, naturally, conditioned by his own vital situation, theological categories and tactical approach.

Nevertheless, there is a conceptual framework grounded on a serious analysis of the theological roots of evangelism, which characterizes the style of In-Depth Evangelism. Such an analysis has led, in my opinion, to the development of several conceptual pillars which shape its strategic methodological structure.

PART ONE: A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF THE WORLD

One of these pillars is its comprehensive view of the world. The seriousness with which the Great Commission has been taken plus the principle of global objectives have given to the movement a holistic world view. The world is thus conceived in its complexity — a complicated mosaic which dramatizes how much there is yet to be done for the evangelization of the world. Let us outline three of the most important pieces of this mosaic.

1. The geographical dimension

A look at a world map reminds us much too quickly of the many lands where the Christian faith has not yet penetrated. Studies keep popping up which show large geographical blocks that remain beyond the frontiers of the faith or where it is spreading disproportionately. Asia, for example, which comprises two-thirds of the inhabitable earth, is overwhelmingly non-Christian. In Africa there are many regions that are practically closed to the Gospel or remain largely unevangelized. In the Americas and Europe entire regions are undergoing a rapid process of dechristianization. Today, more than ever, the Church needs to take seriously the geographical dimension of the Great Commission.

2. The human dimension

Clusters of men and women are brought together by family, linguistic, ideological, educational, and professional ties and make the mosaic more interesting and complicated. They challenge geographical and political boundaries. They shape the course of history. They work for or against the Gospel and thus constitute a constant challenge to the evangelistic enterprise. They force the latter to evaluate its performance and be on the lookout for new approaches. They further dramatize how far the Christian Church has to go to reach the fulfillment of its evangelistic goal; the disciplining of *all* the peoples of the earth (cf. Matt. 28:19).

3. The structural dimension

The world of places and people gives way to the world of *structures*. Since man is a creature of time and space, he is not only bound to a specific locality and cultural ties, but by social, economic, and political structures that shape his existence. His behavior is governed by a set of values, which are at first biological and psychological in nature (they respond to man's struggle for survival). As man cultivates his relations with his fellowman, however, these values take social dimensions which are slowly structured into organized bodies. In time, these structures develop corporate "personalities" and exercise a tremendous influence (in some cases an almost absolute control) over personal behavior.

The geographic regions, the cultural ties that bring together the peoples of the earth, and the different structures that shape their existence form the stage of human life. They are the world that God so loved that he sent his only Son to redeem it from sin and death. It is to this world that the church has been sent to witness to the Gospel.

To evangelize "in-depth" is, therefore, to take seriously the totality of this mosaic. To see the world not as the sum total of individuals, but as a dynamic interaction between the different groups of peoples that inhabit the earth. It is to be concerned not only about the geographical penetration of the Gospel, but also about its cultural and sociological impact. It is to see the Great Commission not only in terms of going to all the regions where there is human life, but to all areas of life where people dwell — from the family cluster to the sophisticated socio-economic structures of our age.

This conception of the world lays as much emphasis on the skyscraper as on the bush, on the solitary individual as on groups of people. It also complicates the evangelistic enterprise, for it places a tremendous burden on the witnessing community. If the world to which the church is sent is a conglomerate of peoples, places, and relationships, its evangelization must involve a matching comprehensiveness in resources, methods, and strategic action. To awaken the church to this reality is one of the goals of the In-Depth Evangelism movement.

PART TWO: A COMPREHENSIVE MESSAGE

In addition to a comprehensive vision of the world, in-depth evangelism is a comprehensive interpretation of the Gospel. Its quest

into the theological roots of evangelism has led to the rediscovery of the Gospel of the kingdom of God as the central thrust of the evangelistic message. This in turn has led to an analysis of the kingdom in relation to the evangelistic enterprise.

1. A message about the kingdom of God

The kingdom is a new order of life characterized by the sovereign rule of God in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. In him God has made himself present in human history. He is the fullest expression of God's love for man and the embodiment of his will. He thus calls unto himself a community of men and women who respond by faith to his love and pledge an unconditional commitment to him.

While God's kingdom is particularly present in this community, it extends across all principalities, dominions and powers. No sphere is outside Christ's domain. Before him all other authorities — earthly and otherwise — are made relative. Little wonder that he is referred to as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the beginning and the end!

What makes Christ's rule unique is not the absoluteness of his authority. It is rather the astonishing fact that he is crowned king by becoming a servant!

...though he was in the form of God, (he) did not count equality with God a thing to grasp, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:5-7).

This kingdom is highlighted by its orientation to the destitute and downtrodden. It is a place for the weak and the sick and not for the noble and the strong. Anyone who wishes to enter therein must become, therefore, poor in spirit and sensitive like a little child.

For this reason, the world does not acknowledge the authority of Christ nor is it able to sense the signs of his sovereign rule. Only the redeemed Christian can see the kingdom at work and understand its mystery, for she has been miraculously transformed by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit in her calling out of the darkness of this world into the marvelous light of the kingdom of God. She has thus been commissioned to bear witness, in the power of the Spirit, to the reality of God's kingdom in the world, to call those who remain in darkness, and unmask and rebuke the rulers of darkness for their opposition to the liberating work of the kingdom.

The kingdom is a paradoxical reality. This is accentuated by the fact that while it is already present it has yet to be revealed in its fullness. This accounts for its apparent hiddenness in the world. Even the redeemed community is not always able to decipher the signs of the kingdom. She too reflects her transitional situation by the inconsistencies of her work. Thus she must be constantly reminded of her mission and be called to the renewal of her vows.

The kingdom also reflects its paradox in the fact that it is a sign of liberation and of judgment. At the same time that it opens a new future, it announces the end of the kingdoms of this world. This makes the Gospel an announcement and a denouncement. What on the one hand is good news, on the other becomes bad news.

The kingdom is, in consequence, a comprehensive reality. It affects not only the personal present and future of the peoples of the earth but their collective present and future as well. For it liberates and judges people in their context. In making relative the powers of this world, it also makes relative the absolute pretensions of each person: his self-centeredness and egotism. In calling men and women to submit their lives to the King, the Gospel also addresses itself to their cultural ties and structural realities and calls them to repentance and obedience. The kingdom can thus take form in the personal life of those who enter therein, through the regenerating power of the Spirit, and also in the structures of society and the dynamics of culture, through the leavening function of the Gospel. No aspect of human life is outside its realm, but neither can the kingdom be possessed or manipulated by any of the components of human history. For the kingdom is sovereign and transcendent. Its presence in history is dynamic and not static, mysterious and eschatological. We can proclaim it, anticipate it in our lives, demonstrate it, seek it, celebrate it, pray for it. But we cannot bring it about by our wisdom and power. It stands outside our control, because it is *God's* kingdom.

2. A message that demands integrity

Such a message demands integrity. It must be fully interpreted. Its meaning must be clearly expounded. The mystery of the kingdom must be unveiled. Its contrast to the existing order must be clearly shown. The character of the salvation that it brings and the judgment that it proclaims must be explained. Otherwise the mission is cut short and the message diluted.

But this is precisely one of the fundamental crises in contemporary evangelism: a truncated mission and a diluted gospel. We need desperately to recover its *comprehensiveness* and the depth of its proclamation.

PART THREE: A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF THE CHURCH

Equally comprehensive is the concept of the church that is implicit in the In-Depth movement. In a sense, this is a corollary of the aforementioned concepts. For the church is a consequence of the Gospel and reflects the complicated nature of the world.

1. A dynamic organism

The church is viewed, first of all, as *an organism*. It is a living body of interacting parts. As a consequence of the Gospel and first fruits of the kingdom of God, the church carries on the life process generated by the action of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, she is a *growing* body, for growth is essential to life, and an organism which becomes stagnant eventually dies.

The growth of this organism is, however, multidimensional. This is so because growth is in itself a complex phenomenon. It takes place at different levels and in many different ways. Moreover, as a dynamic organism, the church must experience growth at the various dimensions

of her life-process and at all levels of her interacting parts in order to avoid stagnation and decay.

This means that the church must experience *numerical growth*. That is, there must be a continuous ingathering of new believers — people who are directly confronted with the Gospel and invited to enter the kingdom of God by faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Those who respond must be incorporated into the church by baptism. They must be led to become active components of the church's fellowship by worshipping God, serving their neighbor in Christ's name and witnessing, personally and collectively, to God's redemptive action in Jesus Christ and his liberating power.

As a dynamic organism, the church must also experience internal, *organic growth*. That is, its parts must ever mature in their interaction with one another. This has to do specifically with the various systems of relationships which are uniquely present in every concrete expression of the church — its form of government, financial structure, leadership, types of activities in which the time and resources of believers are invested, etc. These structured relations, which are indispensable characteristics of the church, must experience continuous expansion and renewal.

Beyond this, the church must grow in the understanding of the Word of God — until she attains "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). The church must constantly reflect upon the meaning of her faith in Christ in the light of society's multiple situations. In this life we will never know all there is to know about Christ and his Word, but we need to work toward a greater and unifying understanding of our Lord. A church which does not reflect on the Word (with all of its implications) will eventually die, because she will stop the growth process at the level of *the conceptual* and cognitive.

As an organism which must spread and affect her environment, the church must grow further *incarnationally*. That is, her involvement in the life and problems of society must become ever more intensive and committed. She must intensify and expand her participation in the afflictions of the world. Her prophetic, intercessory and liberating action on behalf of the weak and destitute must be more and more efficacious. Her preaching to the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, the blind and the oppressed must constantly experience greater depth. Otherwise she will not be able to effectively enlighten the path of life, nor adequately give flavor to the earth nor leaven the structures of society. In this case, she will become practically and functionally a walking corpse.

2. A community

In the second place, the In-Depth movement views the church as a *community*. It sees the church as a people with a common origin and a common destiny. The practical outworking of this concept may best be described in three familiar imageries.

The church is like a *family*. It is a fellowship of persons brought together by the reconciling experience of the Gospel. They have a common calling and hope in the Spirit, a common faith in the Lord Jesus

Christ and a common God and Father of all, "who is above and through all, and in all" (Eph. 4:6). The church is the place where each believer puts into practice his experience of reconciliation through fellowship with other believers. It is the place where everyday experiences are shared with others, where the common calling to the praise of God's glory (Eph. 1:6) is exercised, where the common faith is celebrated, and in the midst of which the common hope is kept alive.

The church is also like *a school*. A place to reflect on the meaning of the faith in the light of the multiple challenges of contemporary society. A place for mutual edification — a teaching-learning setting. A training center for participation in God's mission in the world.

And the church is also like *a team*. A group of people with a common task. Their mutual roles and efforts must be coordinated in order to reach their common goal. It is thus the body through which each believer can fulfill his witnessing vocation.

3. A social institution

To these conceptions must be added that of the church as a *social institution*. That is, the church as a complex system of relations and values. This is another way of saying that the church is not only a miraculous community, but also a human phenomenon. Therefore, it is bound to reflect human qualities. These are not bad in themselves, for after all man is a creature of God, made after his own image. They have been affected, nevertheless, by sin and have accordingly an ambiguous character and stand under the judgment of God.

To say, then, that the church is a complex social institution is to affirm its historical diversity, pluralistic style of life and multiple structural manifestations. Thus the history of the church, while having unquestionable common threads, is a multiphase history. To understand it one must study the history of each of the church's historical expressions. This makes of the history of Christianity a compilation of the histories of Christian churches.

Because of its historical diversity, the church has developed a pluralistic style of life. This is why in one context the Christian life can be practiced in one way and be different in another. This does not mean that there aren't historical, ethical, missiological and liturgical imperatives. What it does mean is that the actualization (fulfillment) of these imperatives may vary according to specific situations and circumstances.

This leads to the multiple forms which the church may take internally and externally. Traditionally, it has been said that the church takes three forms in human society: (i) the local congregation, (ii) the denomination, and (iii) the total community of believers active in a united effort. However, there have been in history, and there are in our days, multiple informal structures which cannot fit into a traditional theological definition of the church as a social institution and which are most definitely engaged in tasks which correspond to the church's mission. I am referring to the so-called para-ecclesiastical structures: Christian institutions such as seminaries, hospitals, schools, social service agencies, bookstores; special interest groups, such as missionary societies, student groups, lay associations; and what has come to be known as the "underground church" — regular inter-confessional gatherings of

Christians for worship, sharing and witness. Surely these too should be considered legitimate expressions of the church in the measure that they gather believers for fellowship, worship and study, and constitute points of reference for witness and service.

However, even when we follow a more traditional approach to the historical manifestation of the church, we discover formal and informal structures that must be taken into account for the dynamic fulfillment of the church's task. For it is in and through these structures that believers are to be found. A local congregation, for instance, is not found, functionally and practically, in the membership roll. Rather it is found in the Sunday worship service, in the church school, in the officers' meeting, in the Women's Fellowship, etc. These are the areas to consider for a strategic advance at the level of a local congregation, for they are the places where the people are to be found and where the functions of the church are carried out.

Because the church is conceived of as a dynamic organism, a community with a multiphase mission and a complicated social institution, In-Depth Evangelism calls attention to the imperative of a comprehensive approach to the involvement of the church in the fulfillment of her witnessing vocation. The issue, in the perspective of this interpreter of the In-Depth movement, is this; it is not how many Christians can be enlisted for action nor how the church can "saturate" society with the Gospel. Rather it is how we can get this dynamic organism to *grow integrally*, how we can get this community to be *at the same time* a living-worshipping-fellowship, a dynamic training center, and an effective team in a complicated world; and how we can put all of her structures at the service of the Gospel of the kingdom so that evangelism — the proclamation of the Gospel, and the subsequent invitation to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and be incorporated into the life of his kingdom — will no longer be a superficial, commercial, manipulative whitewash, but a comprehensive enterprise where the Gospel is shared in depth, and out of the depth of man's needs and multiple life situations.

PART FOUR: A COMPREHENSIVE METHODOLOGY

This is precisely the challenge to which the In-Depth movement tries to address itself through its comprehensive strategic methodology. The key to this methodology is the mobilization of believers for witness.

1. The meaning of mobilization

To mobilize is, first of all, to motivate — to induce someone to do something; to set him in motion; to spark the necessary fire to lead him to take some kind of action. In evangelism, to motivate a person or a church is to get them going in the direction of the fulfillment of their witnessing vocation, get them to share their faith with others. To accomplish this, one needs *at least* three indispensable resources: (i) the dynamic action of the Holy Spirit, (ii) the active ministry of the Word of God and (iii) a contagious evangelistic setting. These resources, however, operate inter-connectively. There is no evangelistic setting (atmosphere) without the action of the Holy Spirit and the Word. There is no action of the Spirit in

which the Word is not actively present and does not create an evangelistic consciousness. Nor is there a serious confrontation with the Word in which the Spirit is not active and does not turn the face of the community to its witnessing vocation.

To mobilize is, secondly, to recruit. In this case, to recruit believers and their resources (personal and collective) for witness in the world. This involves the task of making believers aware of the importance and nature of witness-bearing. While every believer is called upon to be a witness, not all believers can, ought or should witness in the same way. For everyone is given different gifts and is placed in different life situations. Just as not all team members participate in a game in the same way, so in evangelism not all believers play the same role. All, however, can, should and must be prepared to explain personally the meaning of the faith when the circumstance so requires it, and all should know where each fits in the total witnessing responsibility of the church.

Third, evangelistic mobilization involves organization. Believers must be led not only to understand the nature of witness-bearing and their own contribution to the witnessing task of the church; they must not only be led to become aware of the imperative of evangelism and be enthusiastic about the advance of the Gospel in the world. They must be involved in that aspect of the church's witnessing task to which God has called them. This calls for a coordinated program into which each can fit and have a part.

Without a program, the mobilization of believers becomes a truncated effort and a frustrating experience. It is like a team that spends all of its time training and receiving pep talks from the coach without ever engaging in a formal game.

A program is a necessary corollary to motivation and recruitment (information and training). And in so far as it is the practical outworking of a reflective process, it becomes itself a training effort — because it provides the context in which Christians can put to action that which they have received from God's Word and where the dynamic of the Holy Spirit in the believers becomes operative in concrete situations.

And, finally, to mobilize is to supervise. That is, to be on the lookout for trouble areas in the practical outworking of the program; to be ready to adjust and adapt the program to new situations; to spend time with believers, particularly, helping them to do their task effectively; to be consistent in the implementation of the program. But to do all of this with imagination, always looking for new ways to help God's people to fulfill their calling.

2. The process of mobilization

The foregoing premises point in the direction of a dynamic process. To fully understand it, one needs to see *how* it works. How, then, does it operate in the on-going life of the Christian community?

a. *Conscientization* — This is a Brazilian-originated word. It means literally "conscience awakening." It is applied here to the first step of the mobilization process: bringing believers to a *conscious awareness* of their witnessing responsibility to the Gospel in every situation of life.

The mobilization of believers for evangelism requires that they be made aware of the fact that evangelism is not a "take it or leave it" affair

but a *must* in the life of every Christian. Christians must be made aware of the fact that evangelism is not the franchise nor the sole responsibility of pastors, evangelists and missionaries, that it is rather the responsibility of the whole church. To be honest to Scripture, evangelism is the business of the LAITY — the ordinary people of God. The professional churchman participates only as an ordinary member of the body of Christ. This is what the Apostle Paul says so emphatically in Eph. 4:8,11: When Christ

"...ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men. ...And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..."

In other words, the pastor, the evangelist, the teacher, the apostle (missionary!) is called to be at the service of the church, to train it for the ministry (witness-bearing) that will bring about the growth of the Body of Christ. This training involves the task of making believers not only aware of their own responsibility, but also of the comprehensiveness of the Gospel and the evangelistic task. They thus must be brought to an understanding of evangelism as a total process of disciple-making. This process involves words and deeds, testimonies of one's experience with Christ, and the interpretation of his Lordship and Saviorhood in the light of the everyday problems of people.

In order to bring a group of believers into a conscious awareness of the imperative and comprehensiveness of the evangelistic task, there needs to be a contagious evangelistic atmosphere. How? Through worship, prayer, Church school, Bible study, preaching, fellowship, personal visitation, retreats, encounter groups, etc. The entire program of a group of believers (a local church, a student group, etc.) must emphasize the imperative, comprehensiveness, privilege, and opportunities for evangelism today.

b. *Analysis* — A second stage in the process of mobilization is the discovery of the concrete reality in which believers find themselves. In a local congregation this involves an analysis of its own *needs* and *resources* and those of the community in which it is located.

In relation to the needs of the congregation, there needs to be an analysis of its major deficiencies. The criteria to be used for this analysis are three-fold: (i) the biblical model of the church; (ii) the believers' own examination of their performance; and (iii) concrete facts gathered from the church's records: numerical growth rate, financial and leadership situation, community involvement, church attendance, missionary program, etc. Churches tend to grow lopsidedly. They tend to move like a pendulum — at times they put all of their emphasis on a given aspect of their ministry, at others they tackle something else. Many times they do this unconsciously. Other times they think they are doing what they should — until they are confronted with the hard facts of the Word of God and their objective behavior. This is precisely the value of the analysis stage — it permits believers to take a hard look at where they are.

In relation to the larger community, there needs also to be an analysis of all its needs. Too often believers try to do evangelism without

an adequate understanding of the needs of the people that they want to evangelize. The consequence of this approach has proved much too costly for the advance of the Gospel. In the analysis of a community, one can discover key points that can help him structure more effectively both the message and the evangelistic approach.

The analysis of the needs of the believers and of the target area must be accompanied by an analysis of their personal and collective resources. This calls for the development of a profile of the body of believers and the secular community. That is, the gathering of key information which can succinctly describe the "personality" (main characteristics) of each.

Accordingly, there needs to be intelligent observation. At the congregational level, there needs to be careful observation of the effectiveness of people, talents and methods. This will avoid a much too common error — putting people to work in the wrong place. At the community level, there needs to be a careful identification of the key social institutions (schools, service agencies, churches, clubs, etc.), the social and religious values of people, their style of life and their major interests (personal and collective). This will permit the building of bridges for a more effective communication.

c. *Planning* — Effective mobilization involves planning for action on the basis of that which has been observed and analyzed. Too often we learn a lot about people — their needs, characteristics, etc. — but fail to relate it to what we are aiming to do. In evangelistic mobilization, we need to bear in mind that an analysis is useless unless it leads to hard, bold evangelistic planning.

Effective planning involves, among other things: (i) goal setting; (ii) selection of materials, personnel and methods; and (iii) tactical preparation (what comes first, second, third, simultaneous, etc.).

Goal setting is important because it permits people to think about where they ought to go and to check themselves on the way, to see whether or not they are going in the right direction, and if not, to find out why not. In evangelism, Christians need to differentiate between ultimate and penultimate goals. The former are the comprehensive objectives implicit in God's mission to the world — *discipling the whole world with the whole Gospel through the integral growth of the whole church*. Penultimate goals, however, have to do with those things which a body of believers feels it must do to work systematically toward the accomplishment of their ultimate goals.

For example, if in the stage of analysis a congregation discovers that its rate of numerical growth is very good but that its organic, conceptual, and incarnational growth is not comparable, in the planning stage the satisfaction of these needs would become penultimate goals. That is, they would become program priorities, without, of course, reducing that which is already being done. Supposing, on the other hand, that a given congregation has been using an evangelistic approach which in the stage of analysis proves to be unproductive. In the planning stage, the development of more effective methods would become a programmatic goal.

The selection of materials, personnel and methods is contingent on the setting of the program goals. The idea here is to prepare the materials, to recruit the specific personnel for the different tasks that will need to be done, and to select the methods that will best serve to ac-

complish the set goals. In all of this, however, the mobilizing of as many believers as possible must be kept in mind. Otherwise one can fall into the "professional rut" of developing a very professional program with few actors and many spectators. This will kill any mobilization effort because it will limit participation to an elite. To avoid this, there needs to be the involvement of local human resources in the selection and preparation of materials, the distribution of program responsibilities, and the elaboration of adequate methods.

Tactical preparation is important for effective communication. Too often goals are not reached because the way to reach them has been rough and rugged. People have to be brought to do things *a step at a time*. Accordingly, in planning for evangelistic mobilization, one needs to think about all possible obstacles that might hinder the next step. This will permit the anticipation of problems and will smooth the communication process.

For such planning to serve effectively as a mobilization instrument, it must be done in community. Participation in the planning stage is an indispensable evidence of being mobilized for witness. No outside specialist can do the planning for a group of people and expect them to be adequately mobilized. People need to do their own goal setting if the goals are to be accomplished by them. They need to be involved in the decision-making process if they are to carry out the decisions that are made.

d. *Coordination* — Effective mobilization involves putting into action what has been planned in a coordinated effort. This requires a functional, flexible, and adaptable program. If the program is too rigid, it must be loosened up; if it is too loose, it must be tightened; if it does not appeal to autochthonous cultural symbols, if it does not respond to the questions people are raising, if it does not "scratch where it itches," it must be made more adaptable and relevant.

e. *Evaluation* — To guarantee the latter, there needs to be a continuous, endless effort of evaluation. Unless the mechanism of evaluation is inserted from the very beginning, a mobilization effort is headed for failure and ineffectiveness — for it will suffer from inadequate supervision, goal-checking, and continuation (follow-up). This, in turn, is likely to bring about frustration and a setback in the advances of the Gospel.

3. *Conditions for effective mobilization*

Three basic conditions must be met to guarantee an effective process of mobilization:

a. *Mental transformation* — An effective mobilization effort is bound to clash with several traditional concepts. The idea of a pastor-oriented church is challenged by the lay-oriented character of the mobilization methodology. The tendency toward program-centeredness, where a given program is, functionally if not theoretically, seen as an end and not as a means, is challenged by a goal-oriented approach, where the program varies according to the specific objectives. There is furthermore a necessary reevaluation of the specific contribution of outside leaders. Whereas in traditional evangelistic efforts (campaign or crusade evangelism), for instance, a great deal of the emphasis is placed on outside

leadership (an evangelist, a coordinator, Christian artists, etc.), in mobilization evangelism the emphasis is on *local leadership*. Outside leaders are viewed only as *resource persons*. The stars of the show, however, are the local people.

To all of this must be added the emphasis on centripetal-centrifugal action on the part of the body of believers. This challenges either the idea that the church is to be found only in the gathered congregation or the notion that the church is only to be found in the *diaspora* — dispersed in mission throughout the world. But in a true and effective mobilization effort the church is seen in a double action: (1) being *brought together* by the Holy Spirit and the Word for empowering, instruction, analysis and planning; and (2) being *sent* into the world to *learn* how to best serve the world, to *bear witness* for Christ by word and deed, to *be redemptively present* in the struggles of the world and to *call* the peoples of the earth to enter the kingdom of God.

Some believers are so traditional in their thinking that they reject the In-Depth approach. There are many, however, that have opened themselves to the idea of a lay-oriented church, goal-oriented strategy and a coming-going body, and in so doing have experienced something of what Paul had in mind in Rom. 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

b. *Sacrificial action* — A second demand of a mobilization effort is a lot of sacrificial action. That is, being willing to spend time — lots of it — in preparation, in ministry, in evaluation. Also, being willing to put the necessary resources — financial and others — at the service of the integral growth of the church. Too many people say they want results, but are not willing to pay the price. They say they want growth, but are not willing to work to achieve it. They say they want to live meaningful lives for the kingdom, but are not willing to *rearrange their priorities*. An evangelistic mobilization effort is not a pastime, a hobby, or a programmatic appendix to be carried out once a month, or one or two weeks of the year. It demands the *total time* of a given congregation because it presupposes that the church exists for that. It is contingent on the comprehensive view of the church outlined above, which, in turn, is grounded on the outlined comprehensive interpretation of the Gospel and sees the church's mission field — the world — comprehensively, as a complicated, time-consuming, talent-and-money-demanding field.

c. *Think BIG* — No evangelistic mobilization effort is possible without a comprehensive faith. That is, the capacity to believe in the God who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and made him Lord over all things; the God who from "of old is working salvation in the midst of the earth" (Psa. 74:12) and who has called the church to "disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe" whatsoever he has commanded; and who has promised, accordingly, to be with the church always to the end of the world (Matt. 28:19-21).

It is on this basis that the In-Depth Evangelism movement calls the church to lay aside its inferiority, minority and defeatist complex, and move ahead with the Gospel. For a consecrated minority can make a

powerful impact in a complicated world. Indeed, it can become a real prototype of a new world.

4. Program pattern

The In-Depth approach can take many different programmatic forms. In the early stages of the movement, the first experimental program (held in Nicaragua in 1960) was adopted as the model for Latin America. As the movement began to spread in other parts of the world, other patterns were developed to suit cultural and socio-ecclesiastical situations. By the end of the '60s, Latin Americans also began to revamp their program pattern. Today there are literally dozens of In-Depth evangelistic programs around the world. Let us consider four different types, from four different continents, developed to suit the needs of four different situations.

1. Situation one: a nationwide interdenominational effort (Cameroun)

"New Life for All" is a continuous nationwide in-depth evangelism program carried out by the National Evangelism Office of the Republic of Cameroun. The latter is an agency of the National Federation of Protestant Churches.

The aim of this continuous campaign is to organize all Protestant Christians to work together "for the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ to all the people of Cameroun before 1980." The means to achieve this goal is a mobilization program which has the following characteristics:

(i) *Prayer* — This is the "hub" on which the effort turns. Prayer cells have been organized and continue to be organized throughout the country, especially in the homes of believers.

(ii) *Instruction* — The idea here is to motivate believers for evangelism and to help the church experience growth through confrontation with the Word. This is done by the following activities:

Evangelistic institutes. These are held in every province at least once a year. They are geared for pastors, church officers, and catechists. They are usually five days in length and are divided into three parts: Bible studies, stressing the importance of right living; a practical seminar to show how to teach from the manuals and other materials that have been prepared by the National Committee; a practical witnessing experience in the neighborhood where the institute is held.

Bible study groups. Those who participate in the evangelistic institutes go back to their parishes and teach the handbook and other materials that have been studied. Every year new materials are developed so that the groups may be able to continue to grow and multiply their effectiveness by forming new groups in which the material learned can be shared with others. These groups spend additional time in fellowship and sharing. They have become strategic evangelistic outposts in the heavily Muslim northern region.

(iii) *Visitation* — Natural visitation efforts to neighbors and friends are encouraged. New contacts are stimulated — to help people in their needs and difficulties, especially the old, the poor and the sick; to become their personal friends; and to pray for them. These contacts may

open up opportunities to share a personal word about Jesus Christ. Groups are also organized for systematic visitation, and once a year — on the Day of Pentecost — a National Day of Visitation is held where the entire Protestant Christian community is encouraged to go out in evangelistic visitation.

(iv) *Meetings* — Pastors are encouraged to frequently preach evangelistic sermons. Special evangelistic meetings are held at local congregations and occasionally city-wide crusades are held. But believers are advised “not to make the mistake of thinking that evangelization consists in big meetings and rallies. The evangelistic meetings must be carefully prepared in prayer, by Bible study, and home visitation.”

(v) *Special efforts* — Every year there are special “Heli-Missions” that go on for a period of three months. These consist of special evangelistic and “diakonite” teams which are transported by helicopter into remote areas for periods of four to five days. The teams are mostly made up of lay leaders and specialized missionaries (medical doctors, rural development and literacy specialists, etc.). In addition, there are special school efforts geared toward the evangelization of students and the strengthening of Bible groups operating in the schools. There are also radio programs, mostly for believers, which are basically promotional and teaching efforts. They transmit news about the program and have been used on occasion to teach some of the manuals. To all of this must be added the bi-lingual (French and English) magazine, *Onward* (French *En Marche*), which is the largest Protestant magazine in the country and serves as a promotional literary arm of the effort.

(vi) *Evaluation and planning* — Once a year, the Executive Committee, made up of representatives of the various denominations represented in the Federation of Churches, comes together to evaluate the work done and to plan for the strengthening of the program on the basis of the evaluation. The seriousness with which this task is taken is one reason which accounts for the fruitfulness of the National Campaign of Evangelism.

2. Situation two: a denominational effort (South Vietnam)

Evangelism Deep and Wide (EDW) is an adaptable, continuous and progressive evangelistic program of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam (Christian and Missionary Alliance). Its purpose is to train the church “to effectively obey the Lord’s command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature — winning them, discipling them, and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” There are two parts to this purpose which are implicit in the name of the program: (i) to deepen the church in its understanding of the Lord and the Scriptures, to the end that evangelism can become an ongoing activity. And (ii) to spread the Gospel over the entire country aiming at the (solid) evangelization of at least ten million Vietnamese in the next decade and their establishment into local congregations. The program is thus divided into a six-stage continuous cycle of activities to be carried out by each local congregation.

a. *Preparation* — Although EDW is an approved denominational program, each local congregation must decide for itself whether or not it

wants to participate. Accordingly, the program begins with a stage of preparation. This involves an initial explanation by the National Committee to the pastor, his church board, and congregation. This may be explained at first to the pastor at a district meeting, but eventually all the available material must be studied carefully by the congregation.

Once the latter decides to participate in the program, a local five-member EDW committee is appointed. Each member is given a responsibility — the pastor is in charge of preparation, and each of the other members takes over one of the following responsibilities: prayer cells, training, outreach, and establishment.

The appointment of the committee is followed by a study of the church. This is done by the pastor with the help of the church executive committee, the EDW committee, and as many other laymen as desired. In this study the church’s responsibility and strength are determined. The geographical area, population density and characteristics plus the religious situation are carefully considered through the aid of a questionnaire prepared by the National EDW Committee. Attention is also paid to “the different occupations represented in the church family, how many are active in present church affairs, and how many are interested in becoming active in the EDW program.” This is followed by the setting of long-and-short-range goals. In the former, the church visualizes “the number of churches there should actually be within the area of their responsibility, in order to have the area fully evangelized.” In the latter, the church sets a number of shorter goals “that eventually will bring it to its desired goal.”

b. *Cells* — These are the key to the whole program. They are small clusters of believers in every local church that meet on a regular basis in homes under the leadership of laymen who have been trained and appointed by the local EDW committee. According to EDW leaders, these cells are the core of the mobilization thrust of the program. They serve as centers for prayer, biblical and practical evangelistic training, evangelistic outreach, and the establishment in the faith of new believers. These cells meet regularly at least twice a week — once for prayer, another time for training. During the year cycle, however, there is a specific period (two months) in which most of the time is spent in prayer, although with evangelistic overtones, since the specific purpose of the prayer meetings is to intercede for non-believers. As time advances and the program enters into new stages, the prayer cells become also training, evangelistic and follow-up centers.

c. *Training* — This too overlaps somewhat with other stages. In the Preparation phase there is training. Pastors, for example, are trained to lead the program. Every year they are brought together for further training. Key laymen are trained by the pastor and are further brought together for more training at zone schools. They, in turn, teach the rest of the church under the leadership of the pastor. The latter also uses the pulpit to instruct the congregation as a whole. Then there is the constant training of new believers — plus the family altars.

There is, however, a specific training stage where believers are trained by key laymen for evangelism and spiritual growth. These sessions take place at the level of the cells and are oriented around a reflec-

tion-action axis. That is, *they are not* all theory and no practice. Rather they seek to involve laymen in practical experience of evangelism at the same time that they are studying about it.

The whole program is dependent on a continuous educational thrust. It seeks to build up the spiritual life of believers, motivate and prepare them to share their faith with others personally, spontaneously and collectively, through their participation in house-to-house visitation, their contribution to special evangelistic meetings, and the establishment of new believers.

d. *Outreach* — After the training stage, the cells take a third specific function: they become the nucleus for evangelistic action. Witness bands are organized for the mobilization of every believer in the church and the execution of a clear plan of action. The bands map out the area of responsibility, dividing it into neighborhoods (or zones). They carry out a seed-sowing program using as a point of reference the areas where there are cells in existence but extending the outreach into new areas. The idea is not only to share the Gospel personally but to follow up the homes and individuals to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed, leading to the Lord those who so desire and channeling the new converts into the nearest cell.

In addition, specialized outreach groups are formed to reach businessmen, students, the military, etc., or to express God's love through social service. These groups are complemented by other supportive activities such as evangelistic meetings at the level of local congregations or city-wide, special radio and TV programs, correspondence courses, and newspaper evangelism.

But the key to the evangelistic outreach is the cells and the action of the Witness Band. Everything else, *including the large mass meetings*, are seen as supportive activities.

e. *Establishment* — An essential part of the program is the emphasis given to the establishment of new believers in the faith. This begins by the personal follow-up of the new convert, is followed by his incorporation into the nearest cell, is continued by the pastor in his baptismal class and the eventual involvement of the believer into the life of the church. In those areas where there are no churches, a nucleus of believers is formed and a new congregation is established.

3. Situation three: a program strategy for a local congregation (North America)

Goal-oriented Evangelism in Depth (GED) is a program strategy developed by In-Depth Evangelism Associates (IDEA) of Miami, Florida, for the implementation of a goal-oriented in-depth evangelism strategy for local congregations in the USA and Canada. Its objective is to involve local congregations in the process of total mobilization for the total evangelization of their communities with visible expressions of the unity of the body of Christ. They seek to accomplish this objective through the following steps.

a. *Where the church is headed — commitment.* Once a local church has had a chance to discuss the biblical goals of the GED strategy, they

commit themselves to follow through with it for a minimum of one year. They are then counseled by a member of the staff of IDEA.

b. *Where the church is — research.* This is followed by the gathering of pertinent information to help the church find out where it is now. "For the initial year of GED, the information covers three areas": (i) Data about the community ("census statistics and other information describing the people living within the service area of the church — how many, their backgrounds, attitudes, and problems"). (ii) The past performance of the church (numerical growth rate, evangelistic activities, etc.) (iii) A congregational survey on a typical Sunday morning to get an idea on the congregation's level of personal witness, personal relationship with Christ, their brethren and neighbors.

c. *Where the church is — analysis.* Following the gathering of this information, a group of church leaders and other interested persons meet for a weekend retreat. They analyze together the meaning of the collected data. "As a result of this analysis process, there will be a sizable list of weaknesses and opportunities." From this list the "... group selects the priority concerns needing urgent attention related to both the community and church."

d. *How the church moves ahead — one year possibility goals.* At the same retreat, the group discusses each priority need identified and asks, "Where does the Lord Jesus want us to be one year from now?" "The answer becomes a one-year Possibility Goal for each area of need toward which the congregation will pray, plan and work."

e. *How the church moves ahead — program determination.* Task forces are then formed at the church with representation from the group that was present at the retreat. The latter is constituted as a core group with responsibility for the oversight of the program. Each is assigned a Possibility Goal and is responsible for the development of a set of activities that will achieve that goal, bearing in mind the principles of total mobilization and total evangelization with visible unity. The combined activities of the task forces become, then, the GED program for that year.

f. *How the church moves ahead — short-term goals.* Each activity will have both a date and a specific goal. This provides for periodic checkups and progress.

g. *How the church moves ahead — immediate action.* Each task force then determines who will do what, by when, where and how. Once this is approved by the core groups, it is launched.

h. *How the church continues to move ahead — evaluation.* From the moment the program is launched, evaluation starts with frequent checkups. Careful figures, statistics, and graphs permit the measurement of the Possibility Goals. At the end of the year, the congregations face up to the question: "How did we do?" This implies a thorough assessment of the program, the gathering of additional information and the setting of new goals.

i. *How the church continues to move ahead — recycling.* Before the end of the first year of GED, the church decides whether it wants to renew its commitment to the goals and strategy for another year. If it does, it re-cycles the steps of the program strategy but with its feet more firmly on the ground.

4. Situation four: a city-wide interdenominational effort (Santiago, Chile)

This is a program sponsored by the evangelical churches of Santiago in cooperation with the Institute of In-depth Evangelism of San José, Costa Rica. It is aimed at the integral growth of the church as defined above. It has four basic components which can be succinctly summarized in the code: PR²AC.

a. *Program components* — *P* stands for *preparation*. Time is dedicated to the creation of an enthusiastic, optimistic, and a spiritually renewed atmosphere conducive to the communication of the principles of in-depth evangelism. In addition, churches and leaders are recruited, committees are organized and materials selected.

R² stands for *renovating reflection*. An attempt is made to involve as many believers as possible in study and prayer, thereby setting the ground stage for a deep *spiritual* renewal that will equip them for a broader and deeper evangelistic action in their own neighborhoods. There are retreats for pastors, study and prayer cells, special youth congresses and deeper life meetings. In addition, information regarding the state of the church and the overall religious and social situation is gathered, analyzed and interpreted, at a popular level, to the participating groups. By means of the studies, the information gathered plus the dynamic input of the Holy Spirit gives believers fresh insights that permit them to set realistic penultimate evangelistic goals and formulate hard, bold plans to reach them. At the same time, it drives them to informal, personal evangelistic experiences.

A stands for *action*. Time is specifically set for the implementation of the evangelistic plan of action and the achievement of the established goals. It involves multiple evangelistic efforts — from house-to-house visitation to the formation of new congregations and the celebration of evangelistic crusades.

C stands for *consolidation*. That is, the strengthening of that which has been done. It involves, among other things, integration of new believers into the church, program evaluation and the possible re-cycling of certain activities with the goal of making evangelistic outreach and church growth a continuous process.

b. *Program implementation* — In Santiago, Chile, a highly industrialized metropolitan center which is politically, economically, and socially troubled, the program is being currently carried out for a period of four years. The program components are being implemented as follows:

(i) 1973, "Year of Preparation and Experimentation." Two districts of Santiago were selected for experimentation before tackling larger areas of the city. In spite of some difficulties, due to the socio-political conflicts in the country, there were churches that started the program cycle during that year. This trial experience proved invaluable because it not only brought into the open some practical difficulties, but also revealed important needs in the larger Santiago community and paved the way for the full implementation of the program.

(ii) 1974, "Year of Reconciliation and Renewal." The city as a whole is now the arena for the *Preparation* and *Renovating-Reflection*

stages. Given the recent events that have taken place in Chile in the last several months, the emphasis on reconciliation and renewal has been identified as a felt need. The idea, then, is to lead believers in Santiago to live a reconciled life among one another, setting thereby a model of reconciliation for the secular community, and to experience a spiritual renewal that will lead to the revitalization of their witnessing vocation. Five pastoral retreats have been planned by geographical sectors. Study and prayer groups have been formed and will continue to be formed throughout the city. For the latter, a discipleship course that was prepared and used in the two experimental districts is currently being revised and will be published shortly. Continuous research is providing more detailed information regarding population sub-groups. Toward the middle of May, an evangelistic crusade geared toward reconciliation and renewal will be held with the participation of one of Latin America's leading evangelists. And given the openness for the Gospel discovered among the residents of the four eastern districts, and the limited number of congregations in their respective neighborhoods, a special emphasis is being made on the organization of home Bible studies that may lead, in due time, to the formation of new congregations. Some were already organized in 1973 on an experimental basis and have proven to be very effective.

(iii) 1975, "Year of Evangelistic Penetration and Discipling." This corresponds roughly to the *Action* and *Consolidation* phases of the program. Theoretically, the fuller development of these phases will need to await the results and evaluation of this year's activities. Nevertheless, the following activities are already anticipated: unlimited evangelistic efforts, organization of churches from the study groups, and special efforts to reach social groupings — such as university students, labor unions, women, youth, professionals and businessmen, etc.

(iv) 1976, "Year of Total Church Development." This will involve work with denominations in helping them set goals for recycling efforts on their own. It will also involve special activities with key congregations to help them expand further their range of ministry, if possible, to the regions beyond. Finally, there will be a comprehensive evaluation of the program and a study of the feasibility of carrying it out in a nearby city such as Valparaíso.

What do these four different situations show? First, that In-Depth evangelistic programs are relative to the needs, cultural characteristics, historical circumstances, and resources of the church everywhere. *There are no fixed program patterns.*

Second, that the In-Depth *strategy* is applicable on any continent, to any historical and ecclesiastical situation. It can be applied in a local congregation as well as in an entire denomination, in a city-wide setting as well as in a national interdenominational context, in Africa and North America as well as in Asia and Latin America.

Third, that even the principles of the In-Depth strategy vary in emphasis from place to place. Thus, multiple structural action may be emphasized in one place, while in another the emphasis may be on local congregations; some may put more emphasis on planning and research, others on action and outreach. They all strike a common chord: the

mobilization of the church with all of her resources for the continuous propagation of the Gospel at all levels of society.

Fourth, that as a movement, In-Depth Evangelism is, theoretically and practically, a project in the making. No one can claim to live up to its high vision nor to fully comprehend all of its implications nor to successfully fulfill all he has understood.

Even so, In-Depth Evangelism remains a formidable prophetic movement in the midst of a divided, evangelistically troubled church. Firmly rooted in solid biblical principles, the witness and example of the early primitive Christian community, and the urgency of our time, it challenges the church around the world:

To be what God meant her to be — a dynamic organism with an imperative worldwide, comprehensive witnessing vocation.

To re-orient her priorities in order to fulfill her calling.

To analyze and evaluate her past and present performance.

To reflect seriously on God's Word, the complicated nature and state of the world and the best way to use the gifts that he has given each and every believer in the expansion of his kingdom.

To take seriously the imperative of manifesting visibly and concretely the unity of the Christian faith so that the world may believe.

Above all, to stop talking about evangelism and start acting evangelistically in every sphere of her life, so that the knowledge of Christ may truly cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

IN DEPTH EVANGELIZATION PROGRAMS REPORT

Secretary: H. Payne

The group was quite representative with participants from a dozen different countries scattered from the Americas to India with widely differing cultures and problems. Thus it was impossible to establish an "average" profile of the group though there were many points of similarity between countries.

Much time was given to discussing the foundational elements of In-Depth Evangelization Programs:

1. What the church should be as an evangelizing force. (a family for fellowship, a school for instruction, a team for action.)
2. The need for a complete and authentic message, e.g., Gospel.
3. A knowledge of, and contact with, the world of our day.
4. Mobilization: what it means and requires of the church, i.e., motivation, recruiting, organization, supervision, sacrificial action, thinking big.

The ultimate goal was defined as a change of the churches' life-style. This is to be accomplished through a mental transformation of Christians in their attitude and concepts regarding evangelism, the world and the church.

Intermediate goals were:

1. To place evangelism at the center of the churches' life.
2. That social concern be the natural and necessary fruit of a holy life instead of an artificial appendage.
3. Revitalization of the pulpit.
4. Reestablishment of genuine unity in the church.

Eventual action steps proposed in planning and implementing of this new strategy:

1. Research and analysis of the situation and the church.
2. Information, inspiration and motivation of churches and leaders.
3. Recruiting of helpers and staff.
4. Organization, training and action in local churches.
5. Efforts of evangelism on a regional or national level.
6. Follow-up evaluation, recycling, continuation.

Resources required:

1. A definite plan of action.
2. Convinced, effective leadership in proportion to size of project.
3. Reasonable unity among cooperating missions, churches and denominations.
4. Adequate literature for: publicity, communication, training, evangelism and follow-up adapted to the situation.
5. Finances.